" Si quid novisti rectius istis,
" Candidus imperti, si non, his utere mecum."

THE ASYLUM JOURNAL,

Published by Authority of

The Association of Medical Officers of Asylums and Hospitals for the Insane.

No. 9. NOVEMBER 15, 1854. Price 6d. Stamped 7d.

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Our First Birthday.

At the end of each year of labor, the workman, in whatever field his efforts may be expended, is accustomed to survey the results and to estimate his progress. The merchant takes stock of his goods, the agriculturist calculates his gains and re-values his cattle and crops, the politician counts his party, and the student contemplates the more noble acquisitions of mind.

We therefore need no better excuse than custom and utility at the end of the first year of our editorial labors for briefly commenting upon the progress of the *Asylum Journal*, and estimating to what extent it has fulfilled the purposes for which it was established.

Its aims and objects were stated to be, "to afford a medium of intercommunication between men engaged in the construction and management of asylums, in the treatment of the insane, and in all subsidiary operations." That this object has been attained is evident from the fact that the numbers of the year contain on an average in each number two original papers, contributed by gentlemen who are or have been the medical superintendents of public asylums The Editor experiences profound gratification in pointing to this proof that the main purpose of the *Asylum Journal* has been attained, and in thanking the gentlemen who have rendered him this invaluable assistance.

The contents of the past numbers may for the most part be classified under the following heads: Leading Articles, Original Communications and Lectures, Reviews, and News.

In the first, the principles of lunatic management and the acts of public bodies of men officially engaged in the control of that management are discussed. The Non-restraint system and the Norfolk Asylum business are examples of these two legitimate subjects of discussion. The Editor alone is responsible for this portion of the *Journal*, in conducting which he is conscious of having held fast by that which appeared to him true and just. Certain principles of management which he has deemed of vital importance to the well-being of the inmates of asylums he has maintained perhaps with more earnestness than persons holding opposite views might approve of; but in doing so he has scrupulously avoided expressions, which rightly considered, could by any possibility give personal annoyance to any one. That excellent and estimable men often identify themselves with erroneous and mischievous principles must ever be a peculiar subject of regret to any person of right feeling, whom circumstances may have placed in active hostility to those principles; and if against this may be set off the consideration that, the best men are the most worth convincing, it must be acknowledged that little thanks are given even by them: indeed, good men are generally the hardest to convince of any intellectual error, and are apt to suffer more than others in the process. A selfish man abandons a mistake immediately you succeed in proving to him that it is one; but the errors of one whose feelings are noble and generous indicate a more deeply rooted perversion of the intellectual faculties, since they exist in defiance of the instinctive logic of a good heart.

The original communications comprehend articles

https://doi.org/10.1192/S2514990300001130 Published online by Cambridge University Press

on the pathology and treatment of disease, like the admirable papers of Dr. Boyd and Dr. Arlidge; communications on matters of asylum utility; and a third class, which forms a new and peculiar feature in this *Journal*, namely, descriptive accounts of public asylums and hospitals. The descriptions of the Kent, the Lincolnshire, and the Coton Hill Asylums are of a kind to prove both interesting and instructive to all persons on whom the construction, the arrangement, and the management of such institutions may devolve. We hope that these descriptions will, from time to time, be continued, and that they will embrace, not only modern institutions, in which the buildings are nearly all that could be desired; but that they will also include many of the older asylums, in which grave architectural and local imperfections have been, to a great extent, obviated by the skilful arrangements of the superintendents. It will scarcely be denied, by any one conversant with such matters, that at the present time some of the most comfortable asylums are among the least commodious; a fact arising, in some degree, from the greater age of the more imperfect buildings, and the consequent accumulation in them of fittings and furniture; and for the rest, in the necessity which was imposed on their superintendents to supply the shortcomings of the architect by the more liberal employment of the upholsterer. Certainly the asylums, from which the greatest amount of instruction is to be derived, are those in which the greatest number of difficulties have been overcome.

Another class of contents are the lectures of eminent mental physicians, of which our present number contains an example.

A fourth class are reviews of books on insanity, and its allied subjects. These are necessarily brief, partaking more of the nature of notices than of stated reviews; and the pressure of other matter makes us willing to leave this department to other journals for whose pages elaborate reviews are more suited.

A class of contents to which we attach much importance, and which we hope to see developed, is one for which it is difficult to find a name. We mean the multifarious little matters of practical utility, ranging from pins and needles upwards. The *utilioria*, by which the ship is kept neat, and cleanly, and comfortable. Little matters, but of great importance to the well-being and economy of a large institution, and, not unfrequently also, to the health and the safety of the patients.

We have inserted notices of legal proceedings affecting asylum management; such as convictions for the ill-treatment of lunatics, and other similar matters. But we have hitherto abstained from reporting medico-legal trials, feeling that the intricate questions involved would require more space for their satisfactory discussion than we could afford to spare.

Proceedings of the Ninth Annual Meeting of the Association of Medical Superintendents of American Asylums for the Insane.

We condense, from the July number of the *American Journal of Insanity*, the following account of the above meeting. In the American journal, although the discussions are reported very briefly and the papers read are only named, the account of the business of the meeting occupies twenty pages.

The meeting took place at the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, on the 9th of May last. It was attended by twenty-one medical officers of public asylums, and by one of a private asylum. Dr. Bell, of the Mc'Lean Asylum, Mass., was President. The business was commenced by Dr. Buttolph's resignation of the office of secretary being accepted, and by Dr. Nichols being appointed to that office, *pro tem.*; a Committee being appointed to nominate a permanent successor.

The decease of Drs. Bullock and Stewart, two members of the Association, since the last meeting, was then announced, and two members were appointed "to prepare memoirs of the deceased to be recorded in the journal of proceedings," and resolutions expressive of condolence with their friends. Measures which appear to us not less unusual than they are graceful and deserving of imitation. We know not how it is to be accounted for, but the fact is evident that our brethren on the other side of the Atlantic, engaged in the same specialty as ourselves, are animated by more cordial sympathies, by a stronger *esprit de corps* than we have.

A paper by Dr. Harlow was then read, on the heating apparatus of the Main Asylum, and on the relative merits of steam and hot water for this purpose. This paper gave rise to a lively discussion, which occupied the remainder of the morning, and was continued at the evening session. It terminated in the appointment of a committee to investigate the subject and report to the next meeting.

Dr. Kirkbride then read a paper "On the importance of precision and accuracy in the use of terms for insanity, and instructions for its treatment." He objected strongly to calling a sick man *moon-struck*, or, in other words, a *lunatic*. He also objected to the terms *asylum* and *retreat*, *keeper* and *cell*.

Dr. Stribling thought the term, *hospital* for the insane, very objectionable; as, in his State, a hospital "was regarded as a resort for paupers, the outcast, and friendless; and nothing would be more revolting to the feelings of a Virginian than to be taken to an institution with such a name." *Dr. Brown* remarked, that many of our institutions for the insane had rooms no better than prison *cells*, and he believed it best to call things by their right names. He thought the practice of calling institutions by the name of their principal benefactors, as in the case of the Mc'Lean and Butler Hospital, or by some pleasant local name, as in the case of the Bloomingdale Asylum, convenient and unobjectionable *Dr. Tyler* said, the citizens of New Hampshire, besides employing the usual variety of synonymes to designate the institution under his charge, styled it an *Insanery*.

This discussion will remind our readers of similar ones which have taken place in this country. We cannot but think that, in relation to the employment of words so rooted in the language as *asylum* and *lunatic*, objections are futile, if not frivolous. The term *asylum* is a sacred one, signifying a sanctuary, a refuge from the spoiler; and we trust that our great

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